

NSC BRIEFING

26 June 1957

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MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

- I. In Lebanon, the third round of the four-stage parliamentary election (23 June) gave six seats to pro-government candidates, four to opposition.
 - A. Relatively good showing by opposition forces in this round may mitigate the bitterness toward the government which has dominated the elections thus far.
 - B. Pro-government candidates have now won 40 of 52 seats contested thus far. The final contest, for 14 seats in north Lebanon, will be held on 30 June.
 - C. Foreign Minister Charles Malik, friend of US, scheduled to run in these last elections is being maligned^g by Egyptian propaganda which is using forged documents linking Malik to Israel's Ambassador Abba Eban.
- II. In Syria, the leftist military group is increasing its hold on the government. Rightist opposition continues but is disorganized and leaderless.
 - A. Ailing President Quwatli reportedly has decided to forego medical treatment in Europe at this time.
 - B. Rumors of prime minister Asali's resignation now appear premature.
- III. Nasr has reacted to his recent loss of prestige by attacking his Arab rivals for softness toward Israel and the West.
 - A. Egyptian (and Syrian) propaganda has attempted to link Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon in

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[redacted]

alleged negotiations with Israel to settle the Arab refugee problem on Israel's terms--all under American pressure.

B. Syrian-Egyptian propaganda has also indicated that Nasr will visit Syria sometime soon, at which time Egyptian-Syrian "union" would be concluded.

1. Such proposals do not appear to be viewed seriously by the leaders of either state, except as a propaganda talking point.
2. Should a "union" be proclaimed it would probably bring Egypt and Syria only a little closer than at present.

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C.

[redacted] Nasr may also attempt to refurbish his prestige by making his long-deferred visit to the Soviet Union some time in August.

IV. As a result of Syria and Egyptian smear attacks, Saud is threatening to break relations with Syria.

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B. Egypt which has many contacts and officials stationed inside Saudi Arabia may be expected to use these in a

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major effort to bring Saud back into line.

C. As a result Saud must still move cautiously in developing his new alignments.

V. Further reason for caution in relatively unproductive talks between Jordan and Iraq.

A. New Iraqi prime minister apparently has held back on more aid for Jordan until he gets clearer picture of his situation.

B. This means Jordan's King Hussein will now almost certainly ask for more US aid.

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